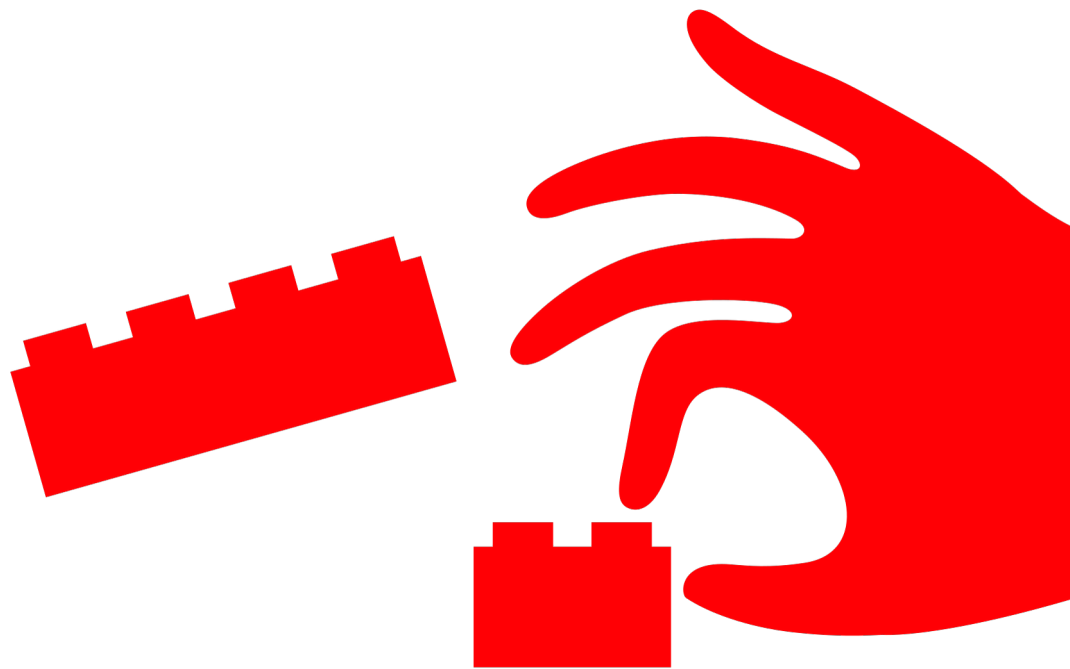


PLAY
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Bringing the Brick-by-Brick[®] program to Australia

Michelle Button is Educational and Developmental Psychologist and Psychology Manager at Learning Links, a not-for-profit multidisciplinary service provider for children with learning difficulties and disabilities in Sydney, Australia.

Learning Links supports a multitude of children with additional needs through its centres and partnerships with schools.

The organisation has always used LEGO[®] based therapy and play sessions to support the children it works with, but Michelle was searching for alternative LEGO building initiatives that would help the children's emotional regulation and social skills development.

Through the LEGO Foundation, Learning Links was connected with Play Included[®] and discovered its Brick-by-Brick[®] program.

Through collaborative LEGO play, the program offers children positive, meaningful experiences in an engaging and accepting environment at sessions which are known to children as 'Brick Club'.

Over the last few years Learning Links has been working closely with Play Included and assisted in the review of the pilot version of the Brick-by-Brick[®] program Certified Facilitator training.

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Implementation of Brick Club

While the Brick-by-Brick® program was initially developed to support the social and emotional development of children presenting with autism, the program may be suitable for any child who enjoys playing with LEGO® bricks and needs additional support to socialise and make friends. National Disability Insurance Scheme Funding (NDIS) can be used to access the program. Each session is for up to six children aged five to 12 years old and takes place weekly after school or on a Saturday at two of the centres in Sydney.

Working together

Two of the goals for Brick Club members are to support their ability to regulate their emotions and develop their social skills. Importantly, the play-based approach has enabled the children to make friends during the sessions.

As well as making friends, Michelle notes that the children have learned strategies that help them to express how they are feeling, which has improved their communication skills as they expand their vocabulary through play: “Brick Club is a space where the children have the freedom to express their emotions and use their own language to explain why they're happy, frustrated, or whatever the emotion may be that they are feeling.”



“When playing together, the children also learned conflict resolution. If they wanted a particular LEGO brick which another child had, they had to wait for the others to complete the next step of the LEGO build. They learned to be patient with each other.”



Play Included®’s Brick-by-Brick® program Certified Facilitator training is available now in Australia for anyone working in the education, health or care sectors, including teachers, SLSOs, psychologists, speech and language therapists and more. Register for the training [here](#).